



NCPA's PAC Tops \$1 Million

By Michael F. Conlan

For the first time in its 34-year history, NCPA's political action committee has raised \$1 million in an election cycle. That's 45 percent better than the previous cycle, which also was a record-setter. And, as of this writing, the books for 2007-08 are not yet closed. The fund-raising achievement so far vaults NCPAPAC into the top 2 percent of the thousands of trade association PACs registered with the Federal Election Commission in Washington, D.C., according to Charlie Sewell, NCPA senior vice president, government affairs.

Crossing the \$1 million threshold definitely has gotten the attention of lawmakers. Combined with our political advocacy and grassroots efforts, NCPAPAC contributions helped rack up some significant achievements in getting legislation enacted and blocking threats to community pharmacy—both of which affect the bottom line.

The biggest victory, of course, was getting Congress to override President Bush's veto of H.R.6331, a bill that included vital pro-pharmacy provisions. Now law, they included a 14-day payment cycle for Medicare Part D claims, a further delay in AMP-based Medicaid generic drug reimbursement cuts, postponement of the Medicare DME competitive bidding program, and repeal of the transfer of ownership of oxygen equipment requirement from supplier to patient after 36 continuous months of Medicare payments.

Major progress was also made on the road to standing up to take-it-or-leave-it PBM contracts. The House Judiciary Committee approved H.R.971, and similar business negotiation rights legislation, S.2161, was introduced in the Senate. They are a high priority of NCPA in the new Congress.

Here are some other noteworthy accomplishments:

- Every DME supplier saved an estimated \$15,000 when NCPA prompted lawmakers to withdraw an amendment that would have required a \$500,000 surety bond.

- "Track and trace" proposals creating a national e-pedigree system for prescription drugs stalled under intense scrutiny when NCPA demonstrated that the new and largely untested systems could cost as much as \$50,000 per pharmacy.
- Compounding pharmacists could have been seriously restricted by some in Congress who sought to require Food and Drug Administration oversight of each compounded prescription. NCPA fought back and the initiative was stopped in its tracks.
- Military families can still use community pharmacies under TRICARE as increases in copayments at retail and coercion to mail order were stopped for the third year in a row.

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"I can't thank enough the more than 1,000 NCPA members who dug deep, all of whom have contributed from their personal, not corporate, funds to the NCPA PAC," said Bruce T. Roberts, RPh, NCPA executive vice president and CEO. "I especially want to thank the some 400 members who have signed up to have regular monthly contributions charged to their personal credit cards." **ap**

Michael F. Conlan is editor of *America's Pharmacist*.